



International Civil Aviation Organization

## ICAO Regional Seminar on MRTDs, Biometrics and Security Standards

Séminaire Régional de l'OACI sur les normes  
des documents de voyage lisible à la machine,  
de biométrie et de sécurité

Maputo, Mozambique  
24-26 November 2010

# Visa and eVisa: rationale, specifications and reflections on future trends

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ICAO MRTD Programme

# Structure of Presentation

1. Visa and its purposes
2. Evolution of a Visa: towards ICAO Document 9303
3. eVisa: state of play, pros and cons
4. Conclusions

# Visa

- ☀ Translation „Visa“ = „has been seen“
- ☀ Visa is an authorisation for a person *to travel* to the state for which it was issued, and apply for admission at the port of entry
- ☀ NB: authorisation to travel to the country – not to enter!

# Common purposes of a Visa

- ☼ Protect the receiving State and society
- ☼ Protect the traveller
- ☼ Revenue generation – visa fees



# Visa evolution: stamp 1920-40s

I have informed myself of the provisions of section 3 of the Immigration Act of February 5, 1917, and am convinced that I am eligible for admission into the United States thereunder.

I realize that if I am one of a class prohibited by law from admission into the United States I will be deported or detained in the United States by immigration authorities, and I am prepared to assume the risk of deportation and of compulsory return in case of my rejection at an American port.

I solemnly swear that the foregoing statements are true to the best of my knowledge and belief, and that I fully intend while in the United States to obey the laws and constituted authorities thereof.

*John J. Nechausk*  
(Signature of declarant.)

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 4th day of April 1923

*Margaret Herbert*  
American Vice-Consul

CONSUL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

[CONSULAR SEAL]

Fee No. 250 (\$1.00)

Visa granted Apr. 4th, 1923 #251.

Visa refused

[Signed photograph of declarant]

AMERICAN CONSULATE  
Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada  
No. 251  
Sweden  
*Margaret Herbert*  
American Vice-Consul  
Date of issue Feb 4, 1923  
(The validity of this visa expires twelve months from this date, provided the passport continues to be valid for that period.)

LEAVE TO LAND GRANTED AT CROYDON THIS DAY ON CONDITION THAT THE HOLDER DOES NOT ENTER ANY EMPLOYMENT PAID OR UNPAID WHILE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

IMMIGRATION OFFICER (3) 14 MAR 1923 CROYDON

R/C 76874

ALLEN REGISTRATION OFFICE 22/3/27

14.3.23

VISA FOR UNITED KINGDOM  
Date 27 FEB 1923 No. 95617  
GRANTED  
SIG. K. N. Baxter  
BRITISH PASSPORT CONTROL OFFICER  
THIS VISA IS GOOD FOR ONE OR MORE JOURNEYS WITHIN A PERIOD OF TWELVE MONTHS FROM THE DATE HEREOF, PROVIDED THIS PASSPORT IS SO LONG VALID.  
AUTHORISED BY H. O. No. 17, (5077)  
NOT FOR EMPLOYMENT

10s CONSULAR SERVICE  
6s CONSULAR SERVICE  
1s CONSULAR SERVICE

VISAS SICHVERMERKE  
See note at top of page 6.

PASSPORT  
23 FEB 1948  
40  
GERMANY (22)

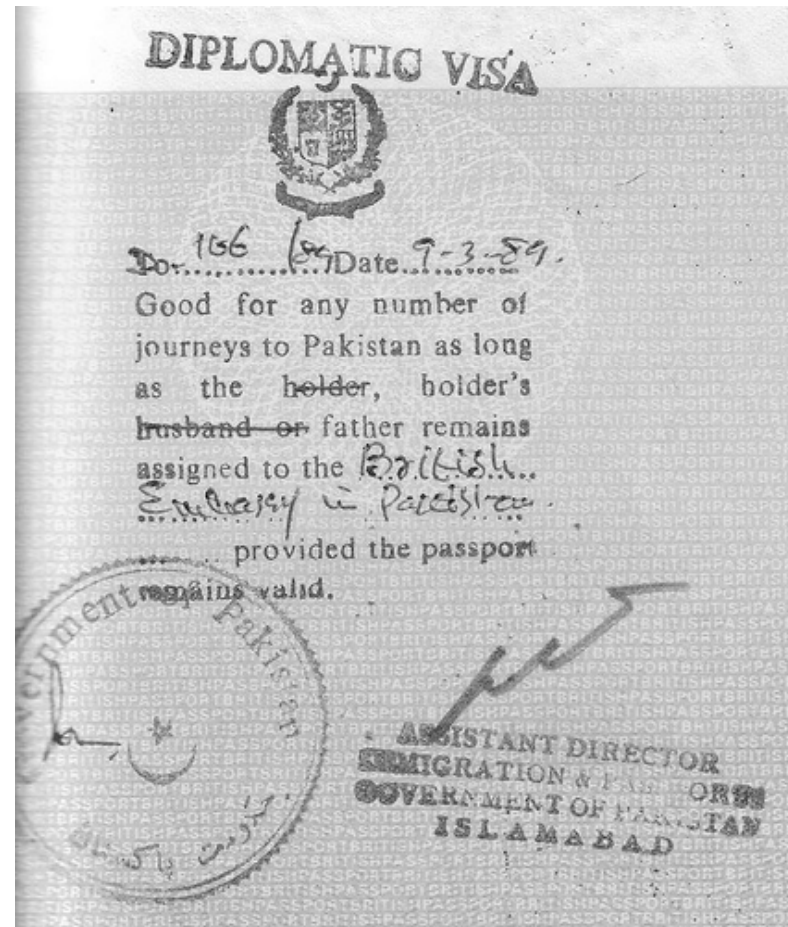
VISAS SICHVERMERKE  
See note at top of page 6.

SEEN at the Visa Section  
HANNOVER  
This passport is valid for journeys to the United Kingdom within six months of date hereof in direct transit to  
Canada  
If passport remains valid.  
(Signed) *Stinson*  
18 FEB 1948

BRITISH VISA SECTION GERMANY

IMMIGRATION OFFICER (4) 24 FEB 1948 HARWICH

# Visa evolution: stamp - today





# Visa evolution: sticker

REPUBLIC OF GHANA  
Ghana Immigration Service  
VISAS

TYPE: B2 GVS 622241

PASSPORT NO.:

EXPIRING: 28 MAR 2016

SINGLE / ~~MULTIPLE~~ JOURNEYS TO GHANA


ENDORSED\* FOR \_\_\_\_\_ FROM DATE \_\_\_\_\_ OF ISSUE \_\_\_\_\_ MONTHS OF DATE \_\_\_\_\_

VALID FOR ENTRY WITHIN THREE(3) MONTHS OF DATE \_\_\_\_\_ (IF PASSPORT REMAINS VALID)

ISSUED AT: WASH. DC

BY: J. AMANKWAH

FEE PAID: \$60.00 DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: 

\*SUBJECT TO REGULARISATION IN GHANA

MYANMAR IMMIGRATION  
YANGON (5)

ADMITTED 13 SEP 2006

UNTIL 10.06

Entries Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Departures \_\_\_\_\_

UNION OF MYANMAR

Passport No. 400 809 231

Visa No. Tks. 2090/06

Type of visa FT


Date of issue 21 AUG 06


Valid upto 23 MONTHS

No. of visits allowed SINGLE

Duration of each stay 4 WEEKS

Also valid for NA Child/Children endorsed on the passport

Seal 

Signature and Name of Visa issuing authority 

23

Embassy of Nepal  
Moscow

Visa No. IB 010219

Nepal Immigration  
15 Days Tourist Entry Visa

Entry within the 6 months hereof if passport remains valid.

Passport No. \_\_\_\_\_

Visa issued at: Moscow

Issued on: October 27, 2008

Entries: Multiple, if visa remains valid.


Previous Stay: 38 days

Visa Fee: US\$ 25

Issuing Officer: Aloudel

For Immigration use only

Visa expiration date: 12.11.2008

Signature: 

EMPLOYMENT PROHIBITED

ভিসা  
VISAS

200  
DAYS

EXIT & RE-ENTRY VISA

নং: ৫৮০৭০৮

পাসপোর্ট নং: ৯৮৭৬৫৪৩২১০

আবশ্যিক হলে দুই মাসের মধ্যে

ALLOWED TO LEAVE WITHIN TWO MONTHS FROM 25-6-2003

RE-ENTRY WITHIN 25-6-2003 FROM DEPARTURES DATE

DEPTS

294 EXIT

KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA VISA

Issuing Post: Washington D. C Fee: 20 USD

Surname: GREER


Given Name: DANIEL CLAYTON Visa Type Class: T

Passport Number: F 0683870

Entries: Single Issue Date: 23.May.06 Expiry Date: 23.Aug.06

Remarks: Employment Not Permitted

Holder permitted to remain in Cambodia for 1 month(s) from date of arrival.

Signature: 

CHIN SAMRATTANAK  
Second Secretary



# Common features so far

- ❌ No interoperability
- ❌ Not machine-readable
- ❌ Security weaknesses
- ❌ Non ICAO-compliant

## SOLUTION:

- ❌ ICAO MRV Specifications (Doc 9303 Part 2)



# Doc 9303 Part 2 – MR Visa

ICAO Visa specifications – not a Standard but a recommended practice  
States encouraged to use it – but no legal obligation

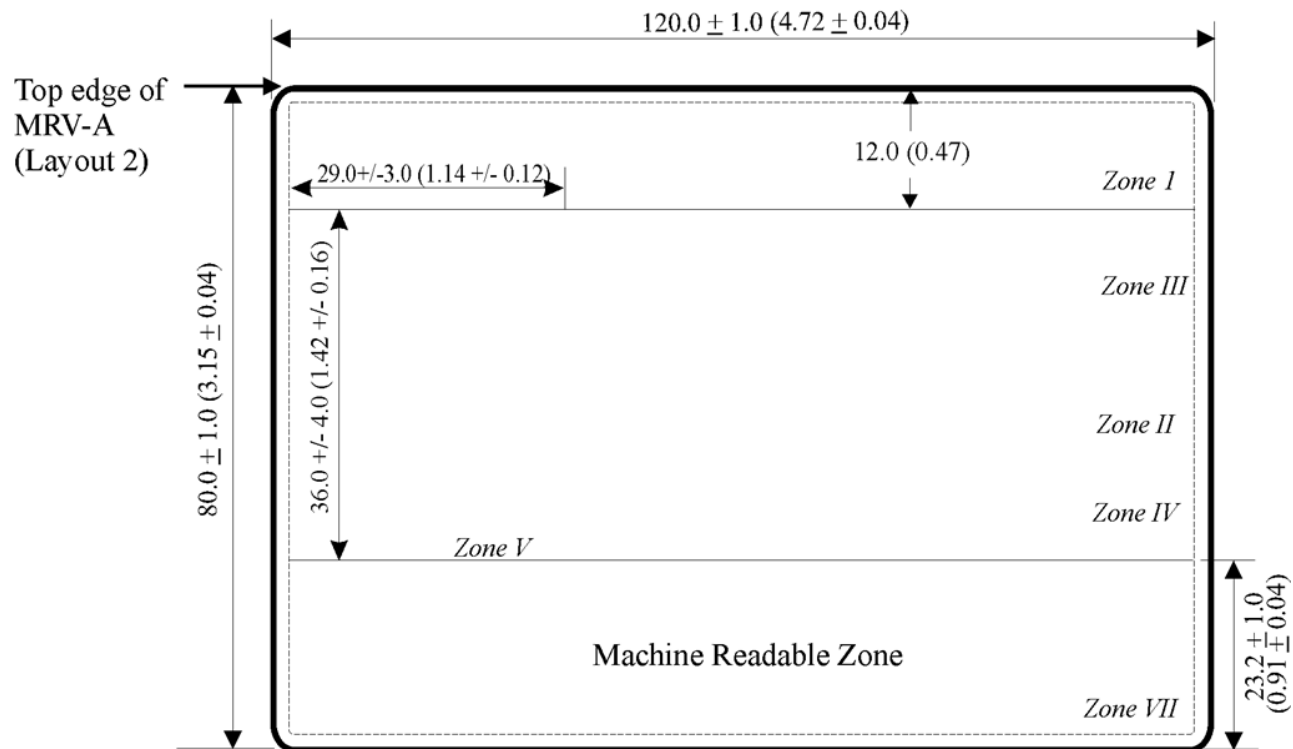
Two MRV formats:

- Format A Visa, and

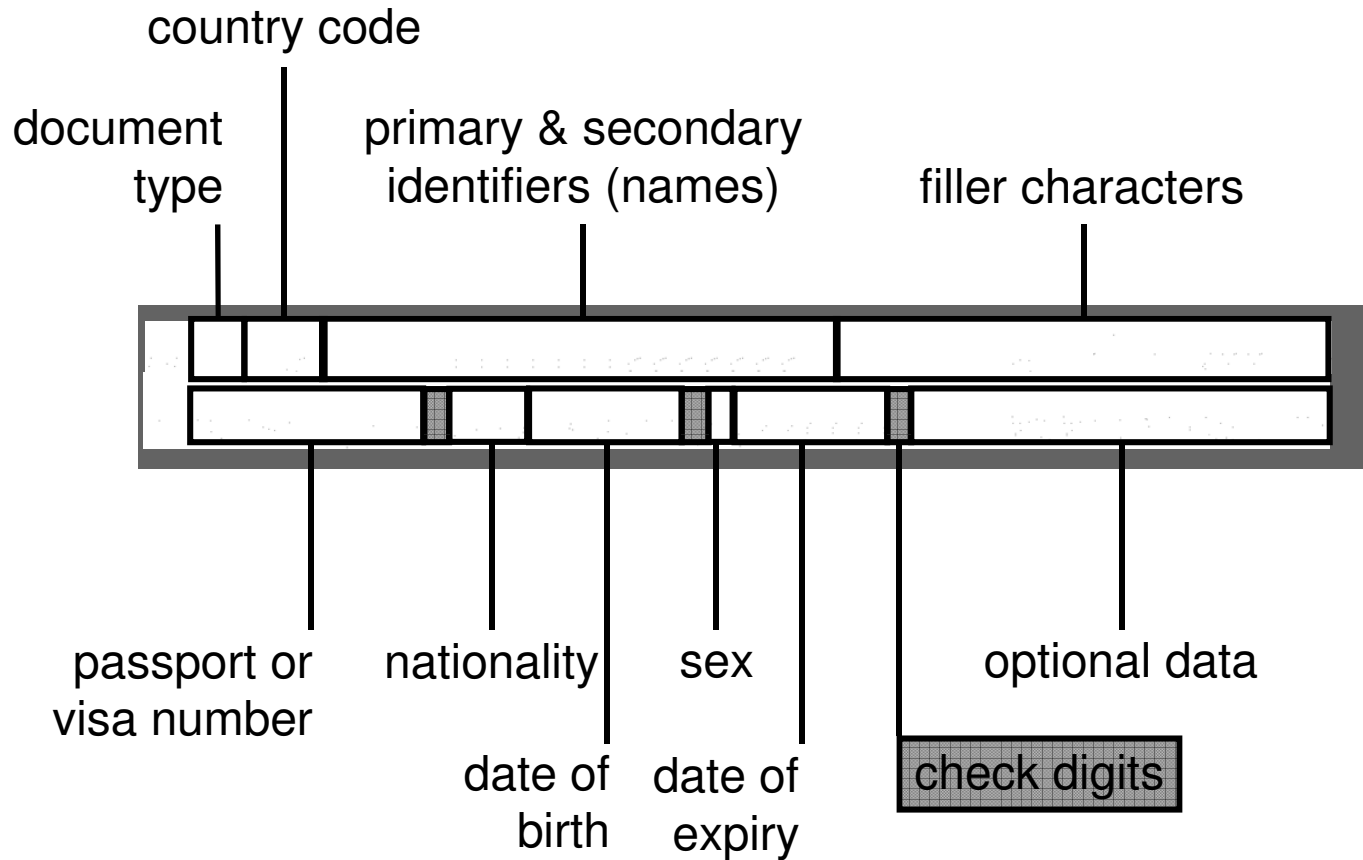
- Format B Visa



# MRV-A: Zone boundaries: Doc 9303 Part 2

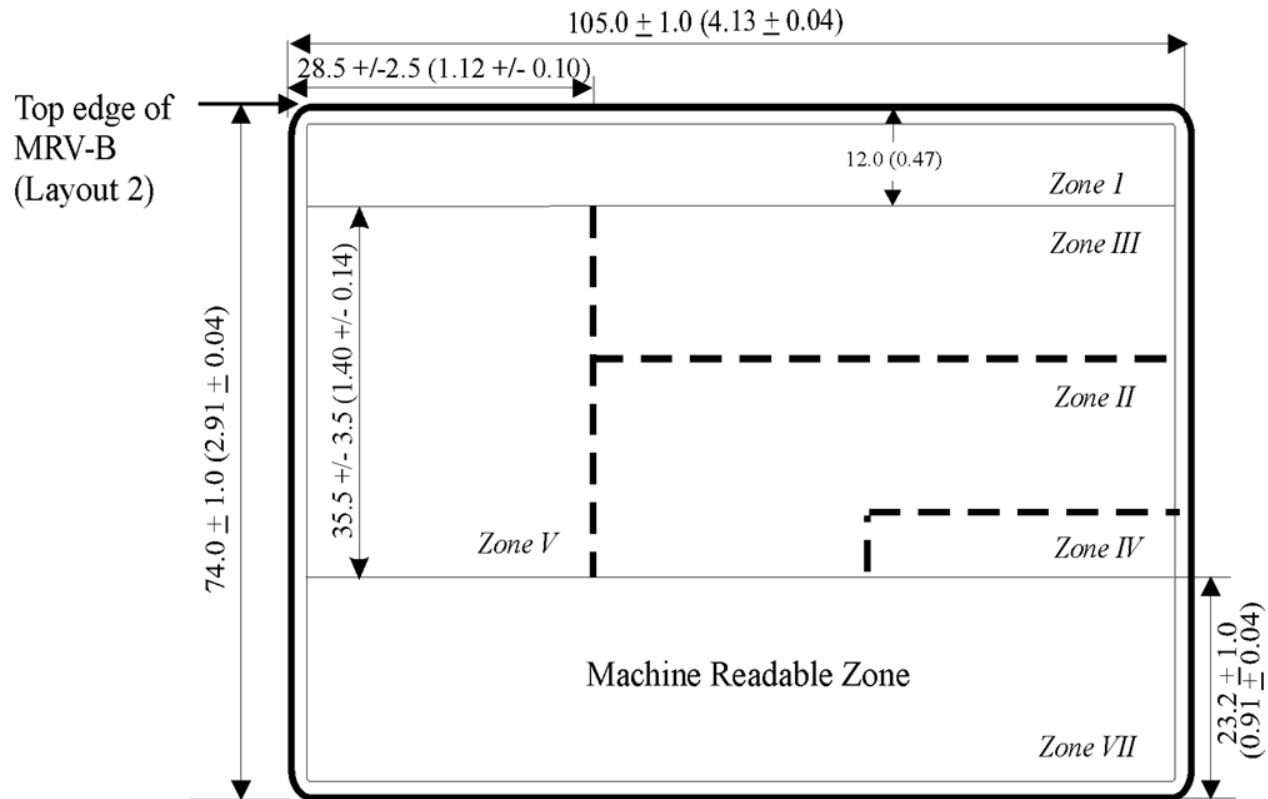


# MRV-A: Machine-readable zone: Doc 9303 Part 2

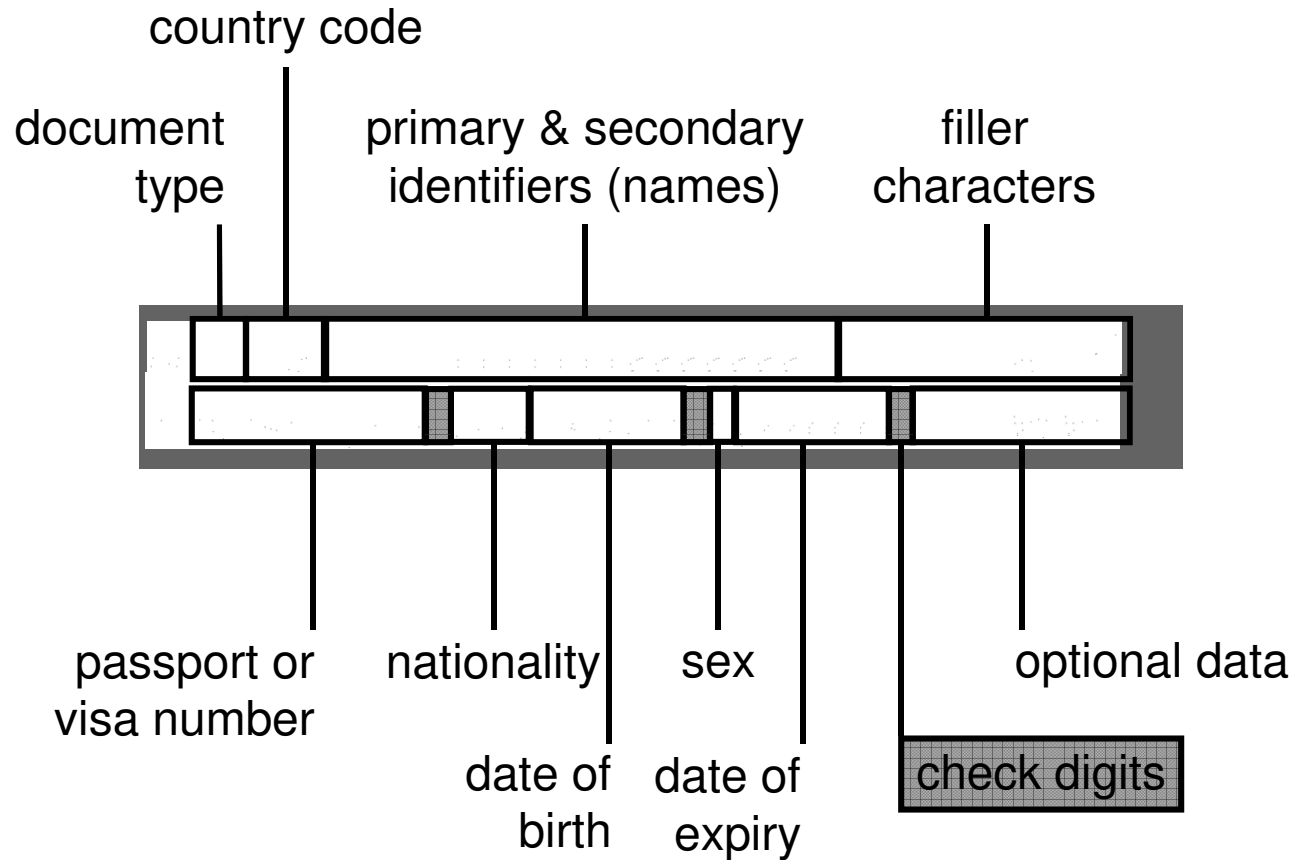




# MRV-B Zone boundaries: Doc 9303 Part 2



# MRV-B: Machine-readable zone: Doc 9303 Part 2











# What is an eVisa?

An electronic visa, or eVisa

- a paperless substitute for a traditional visa, one which can be obtained by a traveller directly online through the internet, a travel agent, tour operator or participating air carrier at the time of making a travel reservation.



# How does an eVisa work?

- Application and visa fee payment made online
- Application processed and issued online, no visa sticker
- Identity and eVisa status checked by the carrier
- Upon arrival identity and eVisa status is checked and the holder admitted into the country

# **eVisas: state of play**

- In effect: Australia (1996, the pioneer), Armenia, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia (the Hajj eVisa), Cambodia, United States (ESTA Visa Waiver)
- Under development in a number of states
- Many other states been considering introducing it but cost high for a “stand alone” system, especially for developing countries
- “Community” interest in Africa (CEMAC, ECOWAS, SADC, UEMOA), Asia (ASEAN), South America

# **Advantages of an eVisa**

- First and foremost --- increased security
- Lower processing and issuance costs for States
- Convenience and savings to Travellers
- To airlines – quicker checks and lower fines
- Fee collection is corruption-proof
- Paperless process – environment friendly

Particularly beneficial for States that have limited number of visa-issuing missions abroad --- and travellers to those countries

# Limitations of an eVisa

- ☼ May not work for high-risk nationals or special visas – where an interview is likely to be required
- ☼ Requires reliable infrastructure – stable electricity and communications
- ☼ No international specifications, best practices or policies yet



# eVisa: current situation

- Emerging need for a globally interoperable e-Visa system that could be used by many countries, individually or jointly
- Currently there exist neither global standards nor specifications for eVisas
- States tend to launch a tender and select a proposal without any standard process to follow or test of robustness (and there have been problems)
- The prospect of fragmentation, inconsistency and potential weakness in specifications and processes is rising

# New developments: the way forward

- ICAO 37<sup>th</sup> Assembly (2010) supported UNWTO proposal that “ICAO should explore with international partners the development of global standards and specifications for eVisas as a matter of priority”
- A37 WP/136 [http://www.icao.int/icao/en/assembl/a37/wp/wp136\\_en.pdf](http://www.icao.int/icao/en/assembl/a37/wp/wp136_en.pdf)
- The ICAO Secretariat will request the NTWG
  - to add eVisa specifications to its work programme
  - to submit a status of work report to the TAG/MRTD in September 2011 - and propose a roadmap for developing universal eVisa spec

## The Vision:

- Producing ICAO international eVisa specifications – as requested by States - building on the foundation of existing ICAO MRTD initiatives
- ICAO offering States a “one stop shop” for technical advice on eVisa implementation and system maintenance

# Considering an eVisa system for your State?

## Need ICAO to develop global eVisa specifications?

- ☀ Please let the ICAO MRTD Programme know  
– your voice and expectations matter!

[msiciliano@icao.int](mailto:msiciliano@icao.int)

[eslavenas@icao.int](mailto:eslavenas@icao.int)

- ☀ Joint efforts and coordination make it easier to  
identify technical expertise and IT solutions  
that may be needed

# Conclusions

Two main trends

1. States increasingly switching to ICAO MRV specifications
2. Growing number of eVisa programmes – and increasing interest globally

The traditional visa issuance procedure at the Consulate changed little since the 1920s – time has come to explore the potential of modern IT and communications -- for enhancing security and facilitation

# Conclusions contd.

- Visa is a process of risk assessment – a sticker or eVisa issued is just the proof
- The foundation is a sound Visa policy – then the best technical solution can be found (ICAO MRV or eVisa)
- An effective eVisa system is to enhance *both* security and facilitation
- Need for globally interoperable eVisa specifications – options being explored by ICAO

# THANK YOU!

## Questions? Comments? Feedback?



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[eslavenas@icao.int](mailto:eslavenas@icao.int)